

E
649
.S32



1



Glass _____

Book _____

The Ending of Strife.

A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN

EMMANUEL CHURCH,

BALTIMORE, MD.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7th, 1865.

BY

NOAH HUNT SCHENCK, D. D.

RECTOR.



1

BALTIMORE:

WM. K. BOYLE, PRINTER.

1865.

Most mighty God and merciful Father, who hast promised to maintain and defend Thy Church, so dearly purchased and redeemed with the precious Blood of Thy Son JESUS CHRIST; increase in His mystical Body the spirit of unity and love, and draw together its members everywhere in one communion and fellowship in the faith once delivered to the saints; that as there is but one Body and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, so we may henceforth be of one heart, and one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

S E R M O N .

Prov. xx. 3.—“IT IS AN HONOR FOR A MAN TO CEASE FROM STRIFE.”

THE war has ceased. We thank God for peace. It was a bitter and bloody war. God grant we may have a real and remedial peace. The philosophy of religious hates and family feuds might have prepared our human judgments to anticipate all the horrors of civil conflict. But the half was not told us. I have no hyena-taste for disinterring the mangled four years which the quick hand of time has gracefully urned or rudely earthed. Enough the conclusion, heroic or humiliating, as you will it, that the older the world grows, the harder men fight. Conversely viewing it, shall we have the consolation, that principle is nobler, sacrifice more willing, virtue more adamantine, and therefore that we are as certain to enjoy the verities of peace as we have certainly endured the realities of war.

Arguing from the multitudinous graves of Spottsylvania, shall we not derive at least the earnest of a heroic peace. God grant it. We can scarcely do less than accept the token. At all events, we bless the Divine Disposer that to the midnight tempest has succeeded the noonday calm, and that peace has come in our day. But before we go further, let us remember that peace, though it “has sweets that Hybla never new,” is yet not the chiefest of blessings. The church bells would have summoned the Christians of our land to a Thanksgiving Service, even though dove-eyed peace was still an exile. There is something higher and holier than peace, something which lights up with beauty even the sulphurous canopy of battle, and which brings a triumphant joy to the heart, even when men cry the fiercest havoc and let slip the most maddened of the dogs of war. This is the supremest occasion of gratitude for the nation and the citizen, even as it is the purest spring of prosperity and happiness. I mean the revealed face and extended hand of God in Christ. Here is the eminent ground of gratitude. Before the spectacle of a reconciled God, a beneficent Father, a ready Redeemer, and an open Heaven, whether we have war or peace, famine or plenty, pestilence or health, we can lift up the song of rejoicing and pierce the very heavens with our pealing anthems

of praise and thanksgiving. And now, on this day, we bless Thee, O God, for the gift of Thy dear Son; we bless Thee for open Bibles and a free pulpit, we bless Thee for plenteous harvests, we bless Thee that we have thus far been spared the pestilence which has of late in other lands been walking in darkness and wasting at noon-day. We bless Thee for indications, neither few nor feeble, that the blessed religion of the Lord Jesus is speedily to be spread across the face of this broad continent, bridging the mighty rivers, spanning the broad prairies, arching the towering mountains, and linking with the golden chain of the Gospel the surges of the angry Atlantic to the rolling billows of the placid Pacific. On this elevated ground of gratitude, the individual, the church and the nation should take their stand and always hold it. Here, lifted above the pigny incidents of common life, we can see God as He is, and praise Him for what He does. Here we can thank Him for the return of national peace, appreciating its value, not only as related to national life and prosperity, but as still more and most importantly related to the welfare of the Church and the Soul; and so contributing, not to the pride and glory of the State, as much as to the glory of Christ and the majesty of Heaven. With our immediate and most coveted blessings, then let us not be so engrossed as to neglect appreciating the paramount and permanent benefactions of God. There is a peace which the world can never give nor take away, holding the soul in the sublime poise of spiritual rest amidst all the distractions of earth, and committing it at death to the ecstatic repose of Heaven. For this we chant the soul's Gloria in Excelsis. To this, the nation's peace, the yellow harvests, the prevalence of health and prosperity are as the preluding strains of an anthem. They are but as tributaries to the grandly rolling river. They are but vestibules to the true temple of praise. They are but feeble ingredients in the cup of Thanksgiving. They are the mere appetizing elements in the soul's great banquet of joy. In view of this, how dwarfed are all the objects which now so largely engross us. The great conflicts of our moral life are but as the gymnastics of childhood. The doted or coveted alternation of prosperity and adversity are but as the dissolving views of cloudland before the majestic movement of morning; the calm and storm, the shine and shadow, the pain and pleasure of life in their fitful play and capricious interchange, what are they, in view of the pregnant realities of the higher life here and the heavenly life hereafter. Morbid are we in our tastes, low and grovelling in appreciation, false to the principles of our religion, and wanting in the noblest elements of gratitude, if we are not able to discriminate the things which chiefly concern God's glory and the soul's interests, and make these the proudest themes of praise; going back and chiming with Job his noble anthem to the ever-living Redeemer, and again blending with Habakkuk in that splendid Psalm where the melodies of praise mingle so sweetly with the under tones of humility "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the

stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

In the general Thanksgiving which at this hour rises from ten thousand altars, perfuming the land and rolling its volumed fragrance to the skies, let us be well guarded that there be no intermingling of the vapors of pride—the rank exhalation of our personal or national vanity. Since the war began the pulpit, the press, all schools of morals and all the voices of religion, as well as the organs of mere secular interest have united in the attempted teaching that this civil conflict, so humiliating to national dignity, so convulsive of the order of society, so derogatory to the principles and hostile to the purpose of religion, so disorganizing to industry and destructive to trade, so disruptive in all its relations for the time, that this war was ordered of God to cripple our vaunting pride, and check our wild career of prosperity, and inculcate lessons of our own inherent weakness, and of our necessary and proper dependance upon Him who is our only strength and should be our chiefest glory. But what is the result? Have these lessons been humbly received and faithfully applied? Have the Nation's fast-days loosened the hinges of the knee as the days of thanksgiving have opened the mouth of rejoicing? And what, let me ask, is, as far as the great body of the people, and I had almost said of the church, is concerned, the spirit of this thanksgiving? Do we thank God that He has bowed us down in order that He might lift us up higher? Nay, with well nigh one dead in every house, do we observe that the peans of rejoicing are modulated to the sorrows of widowhood and orphanage? Rising above all the wreck and ravage of war, emerging from the bloodiest encounter known to history, here is a country realizing Milton's vision of "a mighty and puissant nation," and realizing moreover that which displays the shame as a foil to the glory, an increased national pride and an augmented disposition to trust to the might of the earthly arm. Were I on the platform, were I speaking to please, if my disposition was to "prophecy smooth things," these words would not have found a place; but I am in the pulpit, and my office is to teach, and I trust you will regard me none the less exalted in my patriotism, because I seek to be faithful to our Christianity. If it be an honor for a man to cease from strife, that honor must be conditioned upon his ceasing in accordance with the other teachings of God in this regard. True it is, that valour has been displayed which vies with the most daring achievements of storied knights, armies have been levied in untold thousands and marshalled and disciplined for the delivery of battle with a skill equalling the generalship of the Cæsars and Napoleons; the wager of war has been accepted and contested with a heroism such as romance had never chronicled. The art of war has been developed on land and at sea to such an extent, we trust, as shall make its hereafter use a terrific thought to wrangling nations. A strength has been manifested in this republic so mighty, a determination so fixed and fastened to the end, a renown has been achieved through the wisdom of the council and the prowess of the field so brilliant as to attract the envy of the world; in fact contributions in the material greatness of the land have been made

from every quarter, even in the organization of broad territories and the development of untold mineral treasures,—while the crimsoned surges of war have heaved and rolled from ocean to mountain. And now the nation forgets the honors and the depletion and the debt of the struggle, but is sensitively alive to its victories and trophies. It forgets the bitter lessons of humility which the providence of God inculcated, in a divided nation and an embittered society and a sundered church and a fraternal strife and a hundred gory battle fields and the thousands of earth mounds where nameless heroes were buried along with the blighted hopes and crushed affections and broken hearts of those who in far off homes received the messages of woe. These things the country forgets, for in its teeming and busy population new links are soon formed, old gaps closed up, and sad memories shut out from view. But ah! how keenly concerned for the magnificence of the State and the colossal dimensions of the restored republic and the glittering valour and immense materiel which commanded the final success. Fellow-citizens of America you are the proudest people that ever made a thanksgiving to God. I bless Him however that there is grace left us even for that. But I beseech you, that accepting the truth of what I now present, you will add grace to grace and prove by your humility, your repentance, your enlarged faith and your sincere and single hearted gratitude to God for the blessings of peace, that it is indeed an honor for a man to cease from strife.

The world has a fair appreciation of the honors of strife. In fact few honors are acquired except through some form of strife, be it with our own nature to discipline it up to the victory point or with the various adversaries who with us contend for the palm. The philosophy of success is illustrated by the strifes of the world. This idea is interwoven with the plan of salvation. We are exhorted to be valiant for the Truth, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we are baptized into Christ's service not only as servants but *soldiers*, we are to strive for the mastery, we are to resist unto blood striving against sin. But not he that girdeth on the harness is permitted to boast himself; rather he that putteth it off. The honors are in the ceasing from the strife. And just so it is in the secular joints of men. Glory gilds nothing but final success and the graceful consummations of contest. While the tide of conflict ebbs and flows the awards are suspended. The honors are in the hours of cessation. But in another sense honor flows to him who ceases from strife. To contend merely for the excitement of the contention or for greed, or for vain supremacy, is brutal. To cease when right is vindicated, truth enthroned, justice satisfied, peace conquered, is graceful,—and more than graceful; it is honorable to a man or a nation. Thus honors clustered thickly around the brow of Washington when he made his farewell address to the army, but more than this, and twining into a chaplet of unfading verdure and enduring fragrance when he finally resigned all official power, and ceasing to be President, became immortal.

I can obtain assent to the inscription on the face of this medallion of truth much more readily than to that which is graven on the obverse. All

the conventionalities of pride and success array themselves against the idea that it is any honor for a man to cease from strife unless he ceases triumphantly. All the philosophy of life, embracing our notions of patient continuance, heroic endurance, Spartan firmness,—lit up with the radiance of noble resolve and projected through the defiles where persistent effort cleaves the way to ultimate honors; all this breeds the idea of ceasing unsuccessfully and yet honorably. But do men wisely theorize, and wisely develop their theories in this regard. Is there not a fatal vice in the argument of the philosophy of success. Is there not more than one Pyrrhus in history, are there not many such, who, in the range of our own present observation, we hear exclaiming amidst the agonies of success, “one more such victory and I am undone.” The moralist who described even the most brilliant victory as only “the light of a conflagration,” held before him the manifest difficulty of kindling such a flame and escaping unscorched from the fire. Nay, since man is a “bundle of contradictions,” and life a series of disappointments for good or for ill, and what the world calls success a bauble tossed by the whirligig of fortune, are we not perverse as rational creatures lifted to higher levels of meditation, when we would discuss the true philosophy of success, than the earthly arena where the athletes of society contend for fading laurels.

“Jotham became mighty, we read, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.” And thus it is that the temper of the mind and the object of the life and the fidelity of the effort enter as elements in true success. But that success we may never see. The contestant may from high, yet hidden motives, pause in mid-career, and while men may leer and shug, the angels of God write down of him the honors he won and shall hereafter wear, by ceasing from strife. You well remember the polished lines of Addison,

“Tis not in mortals to command success;
But we'll do more. Sempronius,—we'll deserve it—”

Here is the appeal from the tribunal of man to that of God. This is ceasing in order to conquer. “I confess,” says a thoughtful writer, “the increasing years bring with them an increasing respect for men who do not succeed in life, as those words are commonly used. Ill success sometimes arises from a conscience too sensitive, a taste too fastidious, a self-forgetfulness too romantic, a modesty too retiring. I will not go so far as to say, with a living poet, that the world knows nothing of its greatest men; but there are forms of greatness, or at least of excellence, which die and make no sign; there are martyrs that miss the palm, but not the stake; heroes without the laurel, and conquerors without the triumph.” In all the departments of single-handed or aggregate effort we are called by the truth of the text to observe that there are honors in ceasing more lustrous with the unfading light than any which attach to headlong or dogged persistence, yea, honors greater and more graceful in the want than in the wearing of success. The greatest of poets while cautioning against the entrance to a quarrel, still enjoins that being in, thou “Bear 't that the

opposed may beware of thee,"—teaching, to my apprehension, more the dignity of forbearance and forgiveness than the brutality of blows and blood. Scripture proposes resistance unto blood only as against sin, and persistence to the end that we may be perfect though suffering. For the rest, it is an honor for a man to cease from strife. When the war of the Revolution was closed, England was scarcely less honored than the Colonies, even in the common opinion of the world, by her cessation of hostilities. The martyr who ceased from strife only with the ending of life and surrounded by those who imagined and boasted the triumph of burning him and his principles together, though overwhelmed and consumed in defeat apparently, has his memory garlanded with honors—honors which are his, because of his sublime ceasing from strife. The soul, charged upon by the powers of darkness, infested by its own evil nature, beleaguered by temptation, scorned by the world, and exiled from companionship, condemned to doubt and to suffer and be still, has vouchsafed to it at the last when fidelity to God has been revealed in all its beauty, a pause and a translation, which ushers to honors with which the sufferings of this mortal life were not worthy to be compared. To such a soul the ceasing from strife is the token of enthronement—enthroned with Christ, and honored with Him, as brothers together in heavenly habitations.

I have dwelt thus long upon the philosophy of my theme, not only because the analysis of the text demanded it, but furthermore, because I desired to prepare the wisdom of this Scripture for its application to our times and people. It is important for us to understand that the dangers of prosperity are at times the most fatal. We must learn that it is not only the *successful* ceasing from strife that is attended with honor and happiness. We must recognize the weighty responsibility which rests upon the shoulders of success. And still further, let us face the truth that there is a ceasing from strife, even when martial glory reflects resplendently from a hundred hills of triumph, and victory perches proudly upon a thousand tattered ensigns, and the light of national prowess blazes high for the admiring or envying gaze of the world; even then to cease from strife, and winning with success if not awarded before, the sympathy of mankind for the principles at stake, even then the honors may be lost by forgetting humility and gratitude, by failing to exercise the offices of magnanimity and justice.

We, as a nation, have just now ceased from strife. To-day we meet in our churches to thank God, not only for "the blessings of His Merciful Providence," but also that he has permitted the achievement of peace. We offer to Him the incense of grateful hearts. We pierce the heavens with our anthems of rejoicing that peace has come, that banners rolled in blood are now furled behind the closed gates of Janus, that swords and spears are being rapidly changed to the implements of industry, and that songs of praise are now ascending where lately shouts of battle only rent the air. We bless God, that instead of the plains broken by the iron heel, and ploughed by the heavy wheels of war, and the harbors blocked and beleaguered and resounding only with the wild boom and echo of fierce artillery, now we

"See our plains,
Unbounded, waving with the gifts of harvest,
Our seas with commerce thronged our busy ports with cheerful toil."

We bless God that the war has closed, and beholding His hand in this, as in all history, we cannot fail as believers, in recognizing the sweep of His arm, to bless him in all the resulting consequences. We may not in the purblind vision of our proud or opinionated humanity be able to trace the trendings of the shore-line of His Providence, but we must, as Christians, follow that line, humbly and gladly if we can, obediently and trustingly, whatever our preconceptions and desires.

But in ceasing from strife we come here to-day, and taking our stand by the altar of thanksgiving, ask God whether it is indeed to be an honor to us that we have so ceased. This, as before intimated, is entirely conditioned upon the spirit in which this people receive the great blessing God has sent them, and the manner in which they address themselves to the discharge of those duties pertaining to victory and peace. Other nations have achieved national glory. Other nations have suppressed great insurrectionary movements of bodies of their people. Other nations have been safely guided through narrow straits and over foundering rocks, but never yet has a nation had such a war or such a peace as ours. As a Christian people, a Protestant people, an enlightened people, a free people, we stand before God and the world with responsibilities such as never attached to a country, a race, or an era. If "peace has her victories as well as war," we are peculiarly called to achieve them. Now let us address ourselves to the work God has prepared to our hand, and thus prove not only that we are sincere in our thanksgiving for peace, but that we are disposed to earn the honors pledged to these who cease from strife.

But have we really ceased from strife? The sword is sheathed and the scabbard is hung to rust against the wall, we trust for many long years to come. Is the peace for which we thank God a compelled and hollow truce, or is it a reality,—a rose plucked from the garden of the heart, and fragrant with sincerity? Are we done with our hates and evil speakings? Is our code of morals inferior to that of the savages of our western wilds, who when they bury the hatchet resume in all honesty the amenities of intercourse? Is not the Son of Peace speaking by the Holy Spirit, repeating now what first he spake by the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, and saying "to the North give up, and to the South keep not back!" I congratulate you, Brethren of Emmanuel Congregation, I congratulate the Church and the country, that there are many and hopeful signs looking to the restoration of torpid sympathies and the re-construction of broken ties. In the last few months, I have seen hearts long estranged warming towards each other again with something of the former glow. Each week these signs of returning harmony are increasing, here not only, but everywhere. God speed and prosper this blessed re-union of hearts. But I forget not that I am addressing a congregation that has been peculiarly constituted during the prevalence of our civil war. Bound by a common tie to a commonly beloved altar, yet the distractions of the hour

have divided those otherwise in sweetest sympathy, by a wide wall overgrown with the thorny vines of bitterness. But, beloved, let us make special record of our gratitude to God this day, that the barrier of which I speak has had no existence inside this fold or at the table of this communion. Representing the most hostile and conflicting elements of this great struggle, yet here you have sat side by side in common worship, listening to the same gospel and bowing at the same sacramental board. Whatever your differences outside yonder church door, once within its welcome arch and all antipathies were ignored. God has signally blest us. The harmony of our Congregation has been unbroken, and its prosperity undisturbed though the mad surges of war have dashed their crimsoned foam upon the very threshhold of the Church. Though through this protracted war our city has been spared the shock of armies in its streets, still there has been no community which has been more thoroughly convulsed, none where the counter tides of opinion have raged more fiercely. From all this there has been blessed escape between the horns of this altar. Surely the Lord has been with us. If we had no other ground of gratitude to-day; this were enough. With the preservation of this harmony, I must say in all candor, that I have had comparatively little to do. What was I among so many, nay, who was sufficient for these things? It has been the Lord's work, and His work alone, and blessed be His Holy Name. I have but one occasion of boasting, brethren, (and will you pardon me the seeming vanity.) and that is, that I have passed through these trying times without bitterness. What I have seen and heard has moved me more to sorrow than to anger. My heart has no record traced by the finger of this epoch which tells of alienated feeling toward any one of this flock appointed me to feed and foster. I can range the eye over this whole Congregation who have kindly followed my lead through this four years wilderness of warring words and jarring interests, and unfaithful as I know I have been in many other and more important things it may be, still, if there be any weakening of sympathy or loosening of ties because of these angry issues, I must needs go outside my own heart to find it. The great law of "Christian moderation" was presented for you adoption when this struggle began, as the only code worthy your following, and as especially the "word in season" to this congregation. Some of us have attempted to square our conduct by this most wholesome discipline of soul, while others have found it more consonant with pride, or passion, or principle, or popularity, or patriotism, to give loose reign to feeling and utterance. "To his own master each one standeth or falleth." Let us leave the "dead past to bury its dead," and giving ourselves to the duties of the hour, attempt further to cement broken fragments and polish the tarnished surfaces of society and train up the vines which have been torn down and trampled. O, what a thrice blessed office has charity now! Bearing the trophies of victory not vauntingly but meekly, and taking the disappointments of defeat not vindictively but gracefully, I appeal to you thus to present a real christianity, appropriating to itself the honor which pertains to the cessation

of strife. I doubt not we have all something left to do before we lay our thank-offering upon the altar to-day, and before we can rightfully claim a share in the honors and joys of peace. In God's name and by God's grace let it be done and quickly. With peace and plenty and health smiling around us, with benignant skies showering the gifts that gladden and the grace that saves, what are we that aught should engross us but peace with our Maker and good will to our brother.

The seventh King Henry, of England, prefaced his treaties with the words: "when Christ came into the world, peace was sung; and when He went out of the world, peace was bequeathed." We commend this fact afresh to the consideration of our beloved Church. When this war began it spake peace to the excited elements. Now that it is ended shall not the Church speak more eloquently by example than it aforetime did by precept. The first to cease from strife should be the Church of Him who founded it as an asylum from the strifes of sin and sinful man. Right nobly, let us confess, has the pacific effort been begun, and we believe, even as we pray, that ere another twelvemonth has rolled, we shall have again a united Church. All this, moreover, through many difficulties. All this despite the obstacles which honest but misguided men are interposing. The Church, to my mind, never displayed a more Christ-like temper than in the recent General Convention in Philadelphia. A similar spirit is actuating the responses to the action there and then taken, and we trust that the open hand reached out in Christian charity will be grasped in turn by all, until every Diocese of our beloved Church shall be linked once more by the golden bonds of love, and all made one in Christ. Thus shall be emphatically vindicated at once the loyalty and the patriotism of the Church. Displaying an unswerving fidelity to the paramount principles of Christ and the gospel, it were impossible for the Church to prove false to other obligations secondary to these, but consequent upon them. The charity and the catholicity of the Church's temper, has had a severe test during the past half year. At one time it seemed as though the cessation of strife in the State was the signal for it to begin in the Church. And at this moment there are those on both sides the question who honestly believe her attitude should be more unbending. We refer this to the overruling of the Great Head, who ordereth all things after the counsel of His own will, and who in rapidly re-uniting the lately separated elements of our corporate Church, is not only getting honor to Himself, but introducing it to full participation in the honors which result upon the ceasing of strife. We accept this as a token of blessing and as a God-given stimulant to a truer unity, a higher and holier walk, a more energetic and valiant service.

If this country is to have a real peace and all its honors, not only must society and the church cease from strife, but all the economics of our national life must be charged with the spirit and decorated with the displays of that "concord," which in the petition of our Litany is associated with "unity and peace." The statesman whose eye penetrates the surface of things, and whose broad judgment sweeps the scroll of history as well

as the principles of our humanity in maturing its decrees, rejects the commonly used material of opinion found floating as waifs upon the troubled sea of politics, rejects the brief and exciting issues of the hour and the man, as false and often fatal elements of thought and decision. He would teach us now that the lessons of the senate, the pulpit, the press and the hustings, bearing upon the cause of our mighty struggle, have been faulty, as not embracing the real *casus belli*; that behind the local irritations and inter-state conflicts of theory, behind even the great question of our relation to that portion of the African race dwelling in our midst, behind all mooted questions of strife and dissension, there stood a gigantic enemy to peace; born of the cupidity of man, and fostered by the wild ambitions of trade and the maddening desire for wealth and power, and finally developed in all its monstrous proportions concurrently with the development of the great American interests; and which sternly pointed to the different departments of industry and the products of the varied sections, and the commerce of different ports and the energy of different trade elements, as hostile each to the other, as clashing already with such fierceness as to threaten destruction, and as presenting a case of impossible legislation upon principles at all equitable. Or in other words, that the interests of individuals in a land stretching from such broad parallels, and with such immense economies, were impossible to be preserved under a uniform legislation; and therefore the ultimate recourse of money-loving and power-loving man, to assert by whatever means the superior rights of self. Now, if this be at all a fair interpretation of the moving cause of our great civil struggle, we have disclosed another quarter, where, under the text, our appeal may well lie. But here, alas, we meet the dullest conscience. Still how vastly important that the country should at this time eliminate all the germs of dissension. If strife be not suspended in the place where the conflagration began, we are never safe from civil incendiarism. If the men of mills and counting-rooms, of wheat-growing prairies and cotton-growing savannahs cannot curb their cupidity, and build their business a little more on the foundation principles of their religion, we have little hope of the republic. Luxury on the one side and the bayonet on the other, present a fatal alternative to the country's future, unless the strife of business interests gives place to the concord of a mutually benefitting industry. There is an honor greater than that of the "Merchant Prince," a dignity superior to that of the "Lord of the Soil," a position prouder than that of the Master of a Million Spindles. God tells us what it is when he declares that "it is an honor for a man to cease from strife." Teaching these wielders of influence, that in their mad rivalry they are tearing down the fabric of the State to rear with the ruins a tower to vanity, teaching them moreover, that by their ceasing from what is indeed a senseless strife, theirs shall be the honor of buttressing and building higher the walls of the State, strengthening its gates and doubling its defences; and more than this, and most of all, they shall receive from God the honor with which He decorates the souls of those who cease from strife. That this is to be accomplished, we see, in the strange inversions of interest this war has, directly or indirectly, occasioned, in the peculiar diversion of trade

into new channels, in the creation of new elements of traffic, in the discovery of new points and objects of industry and energy, in the changed relations of labor to capital, in the recent organization and rapid peopling of vast territories, in the linking together of the Atlantic and Pacific seabards by Telegraphs and Rail Roads, in the wonderful discovery of vast mineral and other rich resources in the bosom of the earth, in the unprecedented impulse given to commerce by the cessation of our domestic conflict, and last of all, but most important of all, in the wonderful commingling of our population,—the great currents and counter currents which began to move with the removal of the military barriers, and which now for purposes of residence and of business, and of ambition are transfusing the elements of our social life and giving with startling rapidity a homogeneity to a population which before the war was intensely sectional. This, under God will not only be the means of immense development to interests heretofore denied a healthy growth, but will prove remedial to a thousand of the ills of State,—chief among which, will be the allaying of trade hostilities, and sectional heart-burnings. By these or by whatever means this glorious end be achieved, it is the duty, as it should be the glory of all men who love their country's weal, and would make sure the continuance of a Christian peace, to help each agency to its object and stimulate each occasion until it merges into blessed consequences.

Will the day ever come when the politicians by ceasing from strife shall acquire a little real honor for themselves, and confer upon the Nation an immense advantage. I mean not that little group of worthies, who, being statesmen, cannot be politicians. But aside from these, was there ever a country ancient or modern cursed as we are by these barnacles impeding the good ship's progress, these vampires sucking the life-blood of the body politic, these parasites clinging to and deriving all their nutriment from the body and branches of this towering and wide-spreading tree! All agree that *they* were the proximate cause of the war. They did nothing to help it to an end. Nay, the war was their carnival, a season of cheap popularity and easy patriotism, a period of much credulity and many contracts. And now that the war is ended, shall they not have their rewards? I fear not, for there is no ending of popular infatuation. By the side of the great Captains and the men of true statesmanship, who are admired for their worth and venerated for their services, stand others to whom the country owes nothing but a certificate of infamy. In establishing the reign of order the mind of the country should free itself from its partisan prejudices and inaugurate an era of discriminations. So long as we use office only for the dignifying of aspirants, we are placing a premium upon demagogueism, we are perpetuating the race of political wranglers, and confirming the continuance of pestilential strifes. When we lengthen the term, and increase the emoluments, and in other ways augment the dignity of office we shall command the services of talent and virtue, but not till then. We can never expect the strife of the politicians to cease at their own instance. Men will not put from them the bread upon which they live. But there is a heavy responsibility upon the true mind and

heart of the nation, at this juncture after the costly and ample experience of these recent years and in view of the establishment of a peace that means harmony and security, to adopt such measures as shall compel cessation of this petty strife of petty men. *They* can never be brought to see the honors of ceasing. Better men must help them or compel them to this end and earn the honors for God and the country. I propose nothing chimerical. A concerted public sentiment, a wise legislation and much prayer for the Divine guidance and blessing have in other times effected more than this. The mercies of the present and the peace of the future claim at our hands at least the effort.

But there are other disturbers of our peace: and in this attempt to prove our gratitude to God on this Thanksgiving-day by a complete ceasing from strife, we should also prepare *their* epitaph. In a country so vast and so free as ours there will always be factions and fanatical elements. They are innocuous except as we afford them association with principle and purity. There is scarcely a vagary in morals that has not its apostle. Not a heresy but has its votaries. Never an Utopia discovered, but dreamers throng to people it. Each bubble blown by folly holds its audience of admirers patient until the bursting. Let an ignis-fatius but appear over the swamps of speculation and crowds rush after it waist deep in mire. We cannot argue that these are evils confined to the immediate victims. The strifes they engender are poisonous to the life of society. The questions they raise are detrimental to the public welfare and the common peace. And this, because audience is given when indignant virtue and outraged principle should command silence. To meet these evils we want more of the stern morality of by-gone days. Men who tolerate the press that palliates or even publishes, the pulpits that ignore, the platforms that present these disorganizing or incendiary theories and theorists deserve the emphatic ostracism of all truth-loving, peace-loving, liberty-loving men and women. These are of the strifes from which we must cease, if the land is to be honored of God.

Beloved, if the peace which Heaven has given to this nation be accepted by Christians as a token that we should cease from all our strifes, and if we feel an honest stimulant furthermore in this regard, because of the honor with which God has pleased to crown the act, can we close our eyes to the necessity of razing the barriers which separate and strengthening the ties which connect Christians of different churches. The infidel Voltaire approximated truth more nearly than was his wont, when writing, "All sects are different because they come from men; morality is every where the same, because it comes from God." Visible Church life varies because committed to the administration of men. Not so the doctrine to which it is a Witness. Being *truth* it is unchangeably the same. The unity of material creation, the unity of the race, the unity of the thought world are conditioned by diversities almost infinite in variety. Thus in our worship and in our varied following of Jesus. In the "unity of the Spirit," we live, if we live at all as Christians. In the diversities of our humanity we walk until we reach the golden gate. There we shall 'put

our garments by," to be eternally clothed upon of the same robe. If our faces are Zionward we are all walking together. But "can two walk together except they be agreed?" It is not essential to this that they have similar gait or garments, similar voice or features, but it is essential that they have "the same mind," "the mind that was in Christ Jesus." The law of *love* constrains them to walk together, as the law of *faith* proposes to make them companions for eternity. How, let me ask, is this duty discharged or rather how is this privilege enjoyed? We have all doubtless regarded with much interest the efforts put forth by members of our communion to promote the true fraternity of Churches. On the one hand we have witnessed the experiment of attempted unity on the basis of similar organization, and on the other, upon the basis of common doctrine. These efforts at unity fail and always will, while men ignore the facts that ecclesiastical uniformity is neither designed of Christ nor desired by Christians; and furthermore that real unity is individual and elective, not to be legislated, much less enforced. The conflicts of Churches and the strifes of sects and the dissensions of Christians are stumbling-blocks to society and a scandal to the world. From this pulpit, consecrated to a catholic Christianity and a true unity upon the basis of brotherhood in Christ, I appeal to you, my Brethren, to break down your prejudices against those *in* our Church and *out* of it, who differ from you in anything less than the essentials of salvation. Work together and walk together with all "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth." Love all who love the Saviour. This is "the fulfilling of the law." This is "better than sacrifice." This is the true schooling of the soul for admission to "the general assembly and Church of the first-born," in the blessed Jerusalem of promise. We have our conceptions of the peace that is there. O let us prove our heirship by emulating it here. We know what honors there shall crown those eternally ceased from the strifes of the world. Awaiting that day and preparing for its coronations, let us expel from our Churches and purge from our hearts these weary, wicked strifes; the ceasing from which is the rolling away of the clouds of displeasure and the beaming full upon the soul the honoring smile of its Father and its God.

In uniting with you to-day in thanking God for the return of peace, it has been my object not only to place upon the altar our offering of gratitude, but to indulge such counsels as should enable us to appreciate our peace, enlarge it, preserve it, and be honored by it.

I cannot well conclude this discourse without reference to certain obligations which peace has brought with it, other than those already discussed.

What with the ravage of armies, the havoc of artillery, the devouring of the torch, and the long suspension of husbandry a part of our country presents a scene of desolation where famine in places threatens to follow the path of its ghastly forerunner. The fountains of finest feeling are already pouring their currents of Christian kindness in this direction, and we trust that the balm of noble sympathy may heal many a wound which the war has inflicted. The Churches have been, in instances not a few

rendered unfit for worship and the pastors either alienated from their flocks or left in destitute circumstances to labor and suffer at their posts. It only needs that the story be truly told, that Christians, that all men who have a heart to feel, be moved by the tender constrainings of sympathy and tenderness, to recognize the responsibility which connects them with the occasion.

Then rises to view, while the eye is turned in this direction, another and a weighty obligation. Here are more than three millions of people, by nature indolent, and by long usage dependent, suddenly introduced to the exercise of civil freedom. What restraints and what tuitions, what present helps and what hereafter legislation may be necessary to adapt this people to their altered relations, are problems as novel as they seem to be difficult of solution. The natural antipathies of the races only augment the difficulties to be encountered. The government, the Church, and society at large and in all sections, are addressing themselves to the matter of immediate relief to the pressing necessities of the freedmen. How their destiny is to be worked out, is beyond the prescience of statesman or moralist. If religion had power to send them in numbers great or small as heralds of salvation back to the land of their origin, we should regard it as occasion of the liveliest gratitude. Meantime, their wants and their weakness appeal to our charities.

On this Thanksgiving-day, we must also remember the necessity of a more active religion in the Church and in the soul, in view of the many neglects and the many flagrant sins incident to these years of internece strife.

We must remember our duties to those who, at their country's call, left their positions of quiet industry, to return, after veteran service, wounded and helpless. The wife, whose husband lives only in the thrilling tales of armed adventure, or on the page which records the number that fell in the fierce shock of the charge, or in the brave breasting of the cannonade; the child whose father was lost in the whirl of battle, but leaving a memory that lives in those stories of heroism which men tell with quivering lip; these are your pensioners, ye who have a mind for patriotic thought, a heart for humanity and a soul for God.

This day opens to us many gates of Christian effort which the bayonet had barred, but which duty and privilege alike now invite us to enter. Let us occupy what ground we can, till all the fallow fields, repair the breaches and restore the vines to beautify the walls, rebuilding the waste places of Zion and enlarging the vineyards of the Lord, giving to the children of sorrow the garments of gladness, and tuning even the heart of desolation to an anthem of joy.

The war has ceased. We thank God for peace. We would do more. We would bless Him for a peace that penetrates all the departments of our social, business and religious life, and welds our civil fabric indissolubly together. We cry "peace when there is no peace," if society is convulsed, the Church divided, the trade-world infested with hostilities, placemen and fanatics jostling the State and wrangling each other, re-

ligionists engaged in bitter rivalries, and all men more engrossed with the jubilations of triumph or the pains of failure, than with the sublime tuitions of this wonderful providence. There is work for us to do, more than the interchange of congratulation and the singing of Psalms to the praise and glory of God. Statesmen say there are greater questions before them now than those engaging attention while the war was in progress. It is so with the philanthropist and the Christian as well. Since God has given us peace, He has doubtless designed that we should achieve the victories of peace. Since we have ceased from strife He demands of us that we strike for the honors of ceasing. We need them here to bless the soul and beautify the Church. We need them for testimonies to the world. We need them for reflecting to the militant church and toiling soul, the glories awaiting the final suspension of strife.

Let faith bridge the future and stand we, beloved, in that august audience where the Saviour and the soul make final settlement. Follow the justified and glorified Spirit as it wanders in ecstasy through the garden of God. There is a new song upon its lips, but the words are as old as Christianity, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." This is the Thanksgiving Hymn of heaven and eternity. It is the ending of the fight, the completing of fidelity, the finishing of the race. After these comes the crown. Foreshadowing all this, here is a crown, proffered now to those who will cease from the useless and discrediting conflicts of the world. O let us have a real and remedial peace, pouring balm into every wound and oil on every troubled stream. Then shall the country, society, the church, each have their jeweled crowns sparkling with the smiles of God. Thus shall the Master honor those who consistently cease from strife now, in token and pledge of the sublime honors of the final award.

Oh! that the church and the country could be made to learn that as Peace is the reward subsequent, so is it the condition precedent to the righteousness which has salvation annexed. Eternity will emphasize with its realities as man can not with feeble breath, the spiritual sequence which belongs to nations as well as to souls, that until their peace flows serenely as the river, their righteousness can never be triumphant as the waves of the sea.

O ALMIGHTY FATHER, the God of Peace and Love, we beseech Thee to enable us to put away from us all strife, envy and malice as becometh Thy people, and that our late trials, under the guidance of Thy Providence and HOLY SPIRIT, may be overruled for the furtherance of the Gospel in this land and throughout the earth; all of which we ask for JESUS CHRIST's sake, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 787 356 4